Self-Determination: What is it and what do we do about it?

Module 1

Transition Roundtables November 18 & 19, 2008

Definition of self-determination

- Acting as the causal agent in one's life and making choices and decisions regarding one's quality of life free from undue influence or interference
- Refers to volitional actions that enable one to act as the primary causal in one's life and to maintain or improve one's quality of life
- Activity write a "student friendly" definition you could use with students (handout)

Critical components of S-D

- Choice/decision-making
- Goal setting/attainment
- Problem-solving
- Self-regulation
- Self-advocacy
- > Person-centered planning for IEPs
- Relationships with others
- Self-awareness

For students to become more selfdetermined, they need to be able

- > Set personal goals
- Solve problems that act as barriers to achieving these goals
- Make appropriate choices based on personal preferences and interests
- Participate in decisions that impact the quality of their lives
- Advocate for themselves
- · Create action plans to achieve goals
- Self-regulate and self-manage day-to-day actions

Strategies for teaching self-determination include:

- Encourage students to make decisions that affect their day-to-day activities, including academic goals, post-job experience outcomes, schedules and others
- Emphasize the link between goals that students set and the daily decisions and choices they make.
- Teach them to break long-term goals into short-term goals.

Strategies, continued

- Teach students to direct their own learning
- Self-instruction
- Self-monitoring
- Self-evaluation
- Self-reinforcement
- Communicate high expectations.
- Emphasize student strengths and uniqueness.
- Create a learning community that promotes active problem-solving and choice opportunities.